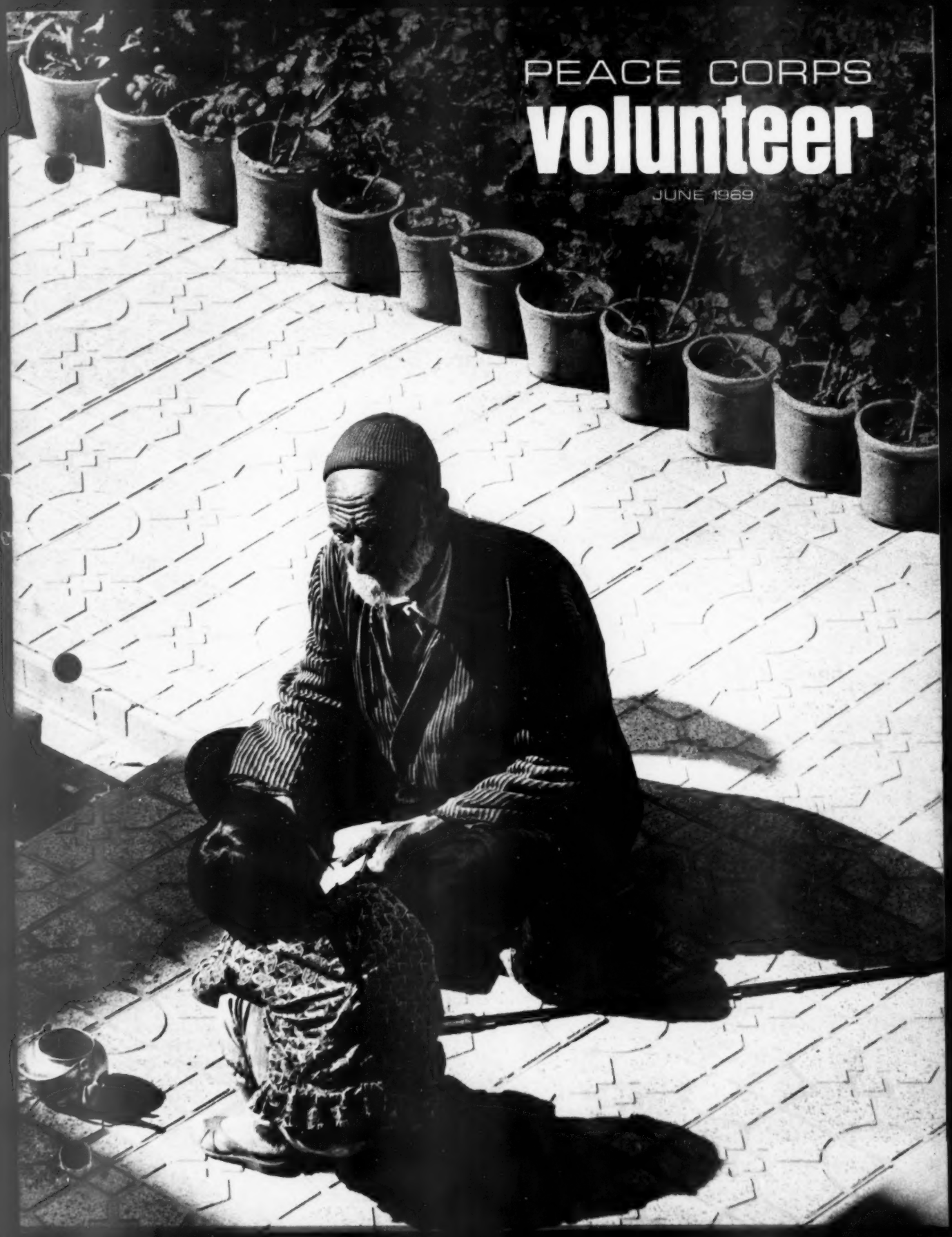

PEACE CORPS

# volunteer

JUNE 1969

*President Richard M. Nixon, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph H. Blatchford and Judge George L. Hart of the District Court assemble at the White House for Blatchford's swearing-in as Peace Corps director. Mrs. Blatchford holds the Bible.*

# **Blatchford** *takes office*

The Peace Corps' third director, Joseph H. Blatchford, 34, was sworn into office in the White House Rose Garden May 5 and left Washington four days later for his first visit to Volunteers in Africa and the Middle East.

For two weeks he visited Peace Corps and host country personnel in Kenya, Libya and Iran. Blatchford was accompanied by several people from Peace Corps Washington and his wife, who served as a volunteer in ACCION, the privately-sponsored voluntary service program which Blatchford founded in 1961.

At the swearing-in ceremony, President Richard M. Nixon made reference to Blatchford's interest and experience in voluntary work and said: "He has the responsibility, despite his very young years, to come up with new ideas. He has the opportunity to develop new programs and those programs will receive the very highest priority within the Administration."

After taking the oath of office, Blatchford described three major moves to make the Peace Corps more relevant to today's world:

One is combined service—a period of voluntary work in the U.S. and a period overseas, perhaps longer than the present two-year Peace Corps tour, which might in the future be considered a substitute for military service.

The second is the reverse Peace Corps, bringing foreign nationals to this country "to work alongside us supplying the necessary teachers and other people we need in this country to fight our own problems of poverty and the problems of the underprivileged," Blatchford said. "We are talking about providing the opportunity to serve for those people, Americans and foreign nationals, who feel there are no boundaries to poverty and that we must strike at these problems wherever they occur, here or abroad."

The third point Blatchford discussed at the White House was that of opening Peace Corps to a wider spectrum of American life—minorities, career professionals and blue collar workers, not just young people immediately out of college who now form the bulk of the Peace Corps. Blatchford said he will have to study the term of service, the living allowance and other details to allow these new types of Volunteers to leave their jobs and take their families with them.

These new directions as well as others for the Peace Corps are being studied by the 10 task forces organized by the new director in May.

# Eyeing changes *in the* Peace Corps

Peace Corps Director Joseph H. Blatchford has called together more than 50 persons—from the Peace Corps staff and from other professions—to lay the groundwork for later, agency-wide brainstorming on "new directions" for the Peace Corps.

Blatchford met with the group for the first time two days after he was sworn in as Peace Corps director. He charged the members to "look at the heart of the Peace Corps idea, at the volunteer concept, at service, at effectiveness, and think about preparations for the 1970's."

"Consider yourselves a kind of legislative committee," he told them, "which consists of subcommittees that will explore specific topics, call witnesses to help explore those topics, and whose recommendations will come before the whole group.

"Nobody here has an axe to grind," said Blatchford. "There is no vested interest except a dedication to the volunteer concept."

The group, which was split up into 10 separate task forces, spent two weeks deliberating their assigned subject areas. They were scheduled to meet together toward the end of May to submit preliminary proposals and recommendations. Blatchford planned to present their recommendations for broad policy guidelines on some topics to President Nixon by the end of May. White House comments on these recommendations would help set the course for more specific discussions during the summer, he said.

Also during the summer, Blatchford said, a wider range of topics will be discussed. He is hopeful that everyone in the Peace Corps—Volunteers and staff—as well as many outside of it will respond to the questions being raised now and throughout the next few months, and will raise more questions of their own.

The task forces held a series of open meetings at Peace Corps headquarters in mid-May. One task force, that on the role of returned Volunteers, called a meeting which 140 Washington area RPCVs attended and then scheduled meetings of the same nature in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles and New York.

Following is a list of the 10 study groups along with some representative questions they considered in May:

### Attracting new types of Volunteers

If the Peace Corps is going to fill the demand for agriculturalists, expe-

**Next month THE VOLUNTEER will present excerpts from the preliminary reports of the task forces described here. Volunteers, staff, returned Volunteers, and other interested persons are invited to respond now or at any time during the summer to the questions raised by the task forces, or to any other matters which they feel are of concern to the Peace Corps. Opinions and recommendations should be sent to Director Joseph H. Blatchford, Peace Corps, Washington, D. C. 20525.**

*At a reception following the swearing-in, the new director talks with aide Mike Agar (left) and Robert Steiner, director of the North Africa, Near East, South Asia region.*

*Senator Charles H. Percy of Illinois is a guest participant at the director's first staff meeting after the swearing-in. Percy said he had high hopes for the Peace Corps; that it was a good time for the agency to seek new directions.*

rienced teachers, blue collar workers and certain kinds of medical skills, what do we have to do differently? How do we get more people (married or single) with these skills? Do we need legislative changes to alter the terms of Peace Corps service? Are special arrangements necessary in light of these persons' responsibilities to their careers and families? How do we involve more poor people from minority groups in the Peace Corps?

### Technical assistance and Peace Corps programming

What are the pros and cons of making funds available to or through Volunteers for the purchase of "hardware" that might increase overall effectiveness of their programs? If greater numbers of technicians are to be integrated into Peace Corps programs, should they be Volunteers or staff or at some intermediate level? Are there new roles that the generalist Volunteer would play in an increasingly technical Peace Corps? For instance, could generalist Volunteers at the village level be used as forward observers to identify needs for technical help, with such needs to be supplied through a pool of revolving technicians who are able to move in quickly, help with the problem, and then move out? Could such a pool best be established by creating in the Peace Corps a clearinghouse which would include technicians from other countries as well as the U.S., from other agencies as well as the Peace Corps?

### Binationalism

Should there be more host country nationals on Peace Corps staff? Could overseas staff be completely made up of host nationals? Can we have nationals on Washington staff? Could we give a contract to a host country agency to manage the Peace Corps program and have one Peace Corps staff man in the country as a liaison? To what extent should Peace Corps program only within host country agencies or projects? Under what circumstances should Volunteers be programmed to work outside of any host country framework?

### Host country Peace Corps and voluntarism

Can the Peace Corps adopt as an important goal the encouragement of host country volunteer movements? To what extent are the potential benefits from such an activity offset by constraints such as: political suspicions of U.S. involvement, lack of host country resources to support such movements, the ability of poverty-level host nationals to afford to be volunteers? What should be the role of Peace Corps staff in getting such movements started?

### Reverse Peace Corps

Africans, Asians and Latin Americans could help the U.S. in the area of educational and social problems. How do we bring about the first step? What do we do eventually? Which countries do we start with? How should we recruit? Why should the participants be volunteers? Should we open it to countries that do not have Peace Corps Volunteers presently, such as developed nations?

### Internationalization and multi-nationalism

What are the methods for establishing multi-national or international programs? What are the advantages and disadvantages of: direct assignment of Volunteers to a U.N. agency; of working through the International Secretariat for Volunteer Service and mounting multi-national projects under their auspices; of joining with other nations to form a new international organization?

### Combined service in U.S. and overseas

Which combinations of overseas and domestic service make sense? What are the problems regarding legislation, inter-agency conflicts, length of service, terms of service? Since in many situations it takes a Volunteer a year to get started in a job, can this learning process either be shortened or eliminated through some combination of domestic service followed by overseas service or vice versa?

### National service as an alternative to the draft

Should the Peace Corps endorse legislation that volunteer service be recognized as an alternative to the draft? What is best in this area in terms of Peace Corps goals? Would such legislation help us satisfy the needs of the developing nations? How would such legislation affect our credibility abroad or problems of Volunteer screening and motivation?

### Returned Volunteers in the U.S.

How can Peace Corps best involve RPCVs and utilize them as a resource? Should the Peace Corps establish a representative Returned Volunteer Advisory Council? Can committees of returned Volunteers be utilized for recruiting and selection? Should a visiting committee of RPCVs be established to evaluate overseas operations? Are there any legal bars to activities by the Peace Corps to involve RPCVs in U.S. social problems on a continuing basis?

### Involvement of Peace Corps staff in the Washington, D. C. community

If the Mayor wanted it, what is the potential for a program, such as a clearinghouse of voluntary opportunities, to assist Peace Corps staff to get involved in the Washington community?

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ON THE COVER: Photographer Dennis Briskin captured this conversation in a courtyard in Iran.

# *The care and feeding of* **Peace Corps staff**

The debate rages: What is the proper focus of the Peace Corps? Is it on the Volunteer or on the development problems of the country in which he serves?

I believe that a good case can be made for the fact that the Peace Corps' prime focus is actually on the needs and goals of its staff, that the only rationale for the way Peace Corps acts is that its goal is the maintenance of and ministration to the staff. I have arrived at this conclusion by being a staff member, overseas and in Washington, by listening to and watching my colleagues on the staff, and sometimes even by observing my own impulses as a bureaucrat.

To illustrate, when I first came in contact with the Foreign Service, I found it very frustrating that the issues of foreign policy seemed so far from the consciousness of the officers or from the substance of their reports or discussions. The operation of the Foreign Service became scrutable to me when I began to think about the goal of the Foreign Service *not* as the conduct of American foreign policy but as the maintenance of the Foreign Service.

And so it may be with the Peace Corps.

There is now a full-time American staffer for every seven Volunteers serving overseas. This count includes both U.S. and overseas staff. It does not include approximately 140 host nationals on staff overseas. (Considering overseas staff alone, there is one staff member for every 17 Volunteers.)

No rational justification can be made for such a dense ratio of staff to Volunteers. The independent-minded young Americans who make up the Peace Corps surely do not need this kind of care and feeding or help with decision-making. Some staff members have candidly pointed out that these great numbers are needed because of the ways in which the staff does business with itself. Putting it differently, one might speculate that the Peace Corps has allowed these methods of operation to grow up because strong consideration is unconsciously given to the perhaps primary Peace Corps goal of serving the requirements of the staff.

A recent example: Although the average number of Volunteers overseas in 1970 is estimated to be 1,000 less than originally planned, it was proposed at one point that staff be reduced at the rate of only one for every reduction of—hold onto your pipes—50 Volunteers overseas.

Most Washington bureaucrats agree that about 25 per cent of their time is spent productively and the rest is spent spinning their wheels in endless, meaningless conflict with other bureaucrats. The name of the game is "defending our prerogatives." I would like to outline here some of the rules by which that game is played, most of the "rules" being actual quotes from Washington staff members in "senior" positions.

## Supercreative Thinking—Think Big
**(5 points)**

- "I'm not sure one staff man for every seven Volunteers is too many; maybe what we need is one for every three Volunteers."
- "My philosophy of the Peace Corps is that what's good for my department is good for the Peace Corps."
- "One good staff man can contribute more to the host country than a whole group of Volunteers."

## The Party Line
**(2 points)**

- "There aren't too many staff—just not enough good ones."
- "Better training for staff is all we need."
- "The staff is better than ever; it's harder to get a job here now."
- "Gimme two more slots and I can really do the job."
- "We're a little understaffed, but *his* shop—*Man!*"
- "A good staff man can make a program."
- It would offend the prerogatives of overseas staff for decision-makers in Washington to ask for Volunteers' opinions directly; they can ask only for the staff's statement of what the Volunteers think. (Official policy)
- "Volunteers are constantly clustered together, griping about everything, not making half the contribution they should and debating whether to quit. The problem is the result of a period of understaffing." (Official Peace Corps evaluation)

## Things to be Thought but Not Said
**(2 demerits for being tempted)**

- My department is overstaffed; I had better cut back.
- My assistant could do my job; I think I'll get out of his way.
- Returned Volunteers really can do everything in the Peace Corps better than the older types.
- Why couldn't host country nationals do some of the decision-making jobs overseas instead of just being the ed. or ag. specialists?
- Maybe I should tell them about the three slots I've got squirreled away.
- Riddle: Q. What's the difference between Peace Corps Volunteers and Peace Corps staff? A. Volunteers know the Peace Corps is funny and staff doesn't.

## Things No One Ever Says
**(5 demerits for thinking them)**

- I don't care how it affects my department; let's do it the way that's best for the Peace Corps.
- Maybe the Volunteers are right and the staff is wrong.
- Maybe reality about the Peace Corps is not what we think it is.

*The author is a senior staff member in Washington who formerly served overseas on staff. He wished to remain anonymous.*

Those who are thirsty need to be careful how they convey that fact in Swazi since there are several ways of showing thirst, depending on what you want to drink.

A drink of water

Beer drunk from a calabash

Milk drunk from a cow's teat

# *Your actions* **speak louder . . .**

**By MELVIN SCHNAPPER**

A Peace Corps staff member is hurriedly called to a town in Ethiopia to deal with reports that one of the Volunteers is treating Ethiopians like dogs. What could the Volunteer be doing to communicate that?

A Volunteer in Nigeria has great trouble getting any discipline in his class, and it is known that the students have no respect for him because he has shown no self-respect. How has he shown that?

Neither Volunteer offended his hosts with words. But both of them were unaware of what they had communicated through their nonverbal behavior.

In the first case, the Volunteer working at a health center would go into the waiting room and call for the next patient. She did this as she would in America—by pointing with her finger to the next patient and beckoning him to come. Acceptable in the States, but in Ethiopia her pointing gesture is for children and her beckoning signal is for dogs. In Ethiopia one points to a person by extending the arm and hand and beckons by holding the hand out, palm down, and closing it repeatedly.

In the second case, the Volunteer insisted that students look him in the eye to show attentiveness, in a country where prolonged eye contact is considered disrespectful.

While the most innocent American-English gesture may have insulting, embarrassing or at least confusing connotations in another culture, the converse also is true. If a South American were to bang on his table and hiss at the waiter for service in a New York restaurant, he would be fortunate if he were only thrown out. Americans usually feel that Japanese students in the U.S. are obsequious because they bow all the time. Male African students in the States will be stared at for holding hands in public.

It seems easier to accept the arbitrariness of language—that dog is *chien* in French or *aja* in Yoruba—than the differences in the emotionally laden behavior of nonverbal communication, which in many ways is just as arbitrary as language.

We assume that our way of talking and gesturing is "natural" and that those who do things differently are somehow playing with nature. This assumption leads to a blindness about intercultural behavior. And the individual is likely to remain blind and unaware of what he is communicating nonverbally, because the hosts will seldom tell him that he has committed a social blunder. It is rude to tell people they are rude; thus, the hosts grant the Volunteer a "foreigner's license," allowing him to make mistakes of social etiquette, and he never knows until too late which ones prove disastrous.

An additional handicap is that the Volunteer has not entered the new setting as a free agent, able to detect and adopt new ways of communicating without words. He is a prisoner of his own culture and interacts within his own framework. Yet the fact remains that for maximum understanding the American using the words of another language also must learn to use the tools of nonverbal communication of that culture.

Nonverbal communication—teaching it and measuring effect—is more difficult than formal language instruction. But now that language has achieved its proper recognition as being essential for Volunteer success, the area of nonverbal behavior should be introduced to Peace Corps training in a systematic way, giving the trainees

actual experiences, awareness, sensitivity. Indeed, it is the rise in Volunteer linguistic fluency which now makes nonverbal fluency even more critical. A linguistically fluent Volunteer may tend to offend even more than those who don't speak as well if he shows ignorance about interface etiquette; the national may perceive this disparity between linguistic and nonlinguistic performance as a disregard for the more subtle aspects of intercultural communication. Because nonverbal cues reflect emotional states, both Volunteer and host national might not be able to articulate what's going on.

While some Peace Corps staff, in Washington as well as overseas, have recognized how proficiency in nonverbal communication would help erase unnecessary strain between Volunteers and host nationals, others dismiss its importance, feeling that Volunteers will simply "pick it up" or that it can be dealt with as a list of "do's and don't's". Occasionally a language coordinator or cross-cultural studies coordinator recognizes its possibilities; but overall, nonverbal communication has been dealt with in a very haphazard way. That nonverbal interaction is a part of every encounter between a Volunteer and a host national should be enough of a statement about its importance.

For all the discussion about this area and its treatment in *The Silent Language* and *The Hidden Dimension* by Edward Hall and for all the scattered, anecdotal "war stories", there has not been a refined method for training or sensitizing Volunteers to nonverbal behavior. Because no one knows all of the answers about it, practically everyone has hesitated to approach this as a training activity. In the rest of this article, I would like to discuss the method with which I have worked and which I feel has implications for both language and cross-cultural studies. I work for Volunteer Training Specialists, Inc. which has contracts for Peace Corps training at Baker, La. There I have worked with groups bound for Swaziland and Somalia, and at the Peace Corps' Virgin Islands Training Center I have been a consultant to trainee groups headed for six other African nations.

While it would be difficult to map out all the nonverbal details for every language that Peace Corps teaches, one can hope to make Volunteers aware of the existence and emotional importance of nonverbal channels. I have identified five such channels: Kinesic, proxemic, chronemic, oculesic and haptic.

**Kinesics**—movement of the body (head, arms, legs, etc.). The initial example from the health center in Ethiopia was a problem caused by a kinesic sign being used which had different meaning cross-culturally. Another example, the American gesture of slitting one's throat implying "I've had it" or "I'm in trouble", conveys quite a different message in Swaziland. It means "I love you".

Americans make no distinction between gesturing for silence to an adult or to a child. An American will put one finger to his lips for both, while an Ethiopian will use only one finger to his child and four fingers for an adult. To use only one finger for an adult is disrespectful. On the other hand, Ethiopians make no distinction in gesturing to indicate emphatic negation. They shake their index finger from side to side to an adult as well as to a child, whereas this gesture is used only for children by Americans. Thus, if the Volunteer is not conscious of the meaning of such behavior, he not only will offend his hosts but he will be offended by them.

Drawing in the cheeks and holding the arms rigidly by the side of the body means "thin" in Amharic. Diet-conscious Americans feel complimented if they are told that they are slim and so may naturally assume that to tell an Ethiopian friend this is also complimentary. Yet in Ethiopia and a number of other countries, this is taken pejoratively as it is thought better to be heavy-set, indicating health and status and enough wealth to insure the two.

**Proxemics**—the use of interpersonal space. South Americans, Greeks and others find comfort in standing, sitting or talking to people at a distance which Americans find intolerably close. We give their unusual closeness the social interpretation of aggressiveness and intimacy, causing us to have feelings of hostility, discomfort or intimidation. If we back away to our greater distance of comfort, we are perceived as being cold, unfriendly and distrustful. Somalis would see us as we see South Americans since their interface distance is greater still than ours.

**Chronemics**—the timing of verbal exchanges during conversation. As Americans, we expect our partner to respond to our statement immediately. In some other cultures, people time their exchanges to leave silence between each statement. For Americans this silence is unsettling. To us it may mean that the person is shy, inattentive, bored or nervous. It causes us to repeat, paraphrase, talk louder and "correct" our speech to accommodate our partner. In the intercultural situation, it might be best for the Volunteer to tolerate the silence and wait for a response.

**Oculesics**—eye-to-eye contact or avoidance. Americans are dependent upon eye contact as a sign of listening behavior. We do not feel that there is human contact without eye contact. In many countries there are elaborate patterns of eye avoidance which we regard as inappropriate.

**Haptics**—the tactile form of communication. Where, how and how often people can touch each other

Swazi belief warns if you point your finger at places of burial, you may never move it again.

A hooked index finger indicates a skinny animal in Swazi.

This is a polite Swazi request to be seated.

**"I can remember my first few months in the teachers' room when we were in the beginning stages of forming friendships. A Korean teacher, most usually a woman, would come over to me, standing next to the stove (my constant position from November to March). She would say something kind and inane about the cold weather, my eating Korean food, etc. And she not only came over to me, or next to me, but nearly on top of me. I instinctively took a step back. It wasn't out of fear (they're all shorter than me) . . . or anything like that. It was just that closeness, barely touching, but altogether too close. It seemed slightly indecent somehow.**

**"As soon as I was aware of my reaction, I began to take greater notice of this 'thing'. I think the fact that coming from the States where if anyone bangs into you on the street, you're immediately looking for an apology or a fight, made me much more sensitive to it. After a year in Korea, I'm more aware and attuned to this closeness and physicalness which does create a sensual atmosphere. It's just another strand in the Korean social fabric. There are no hang-ups about it, no lewdness—it just is. And for me too now, it just is . . ."**

—*Volunteer Helen Derrick writing in the Korean Volunteer magazine,* Yobosayo, *April, 1969*

while conversing are culturally defined patterns. We need not go beyond the borders of our own country to see groups (Italians and black Americans, for example) which touch each other more often than Anglo-Americans do. Overseas, Americans often feel crowded and pushed around by people who have much higher toleration for public physical contact and even need it as part of their communication process. A Volunteer may feel embarrassed when a host national friend continues to hold his hand long after the formal greetings are over.

These five channels of nonverbal communication exist in every culture. The patterns and forms are completely arbitrary, and it is arguable as to what is universal and what is culturally defined.

With trainees, my objective has been to make them conscious of nonverbal communication, construct situations which will result in emotional responses (something impossible from reading in a book that you may expect to be bear-hugged and kissed on both cheeks), and encourage them to continue the practice of this behavior until it becomes a natural and accepted part of their repertoire of communication skills.

Part of the technique has been to divide a group of trainees in half, give directions to one half so that when they are paired up with a member of the other half, the nondirected partner will have feelings of discomfort about his partner's "strange" behavior.

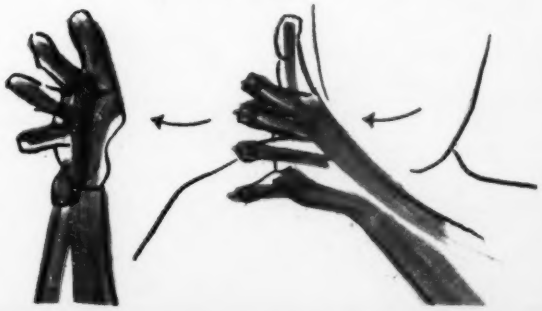
As a sample exercise on proxemic behavior (use of space), the trainees are divided into two groups. In separate locations both are led into discussions of topics like "why they applied for the Peace Corps," "anticipated difficulties overseas" and similar topics in which trainees are interested. After awhile, one group is given a set of instructions. They are told that when they rejoin the "uninformed" group and are matched with their partners, they are to establish a distance of comfort and then decrease it by one inch. At each signal from the group leader, they are to come one inch closer to the partner. These signals may be the group leader's moving from one spot in the room to another, or his stopping the group to find out what specifics they talked about and then asking them to continue. His questions always will be about the content of the conversation, not about the experiment in process. Eventually, when the distance has been shortened by six inches or more, the nondirected partners will experience discomfort and consciously or unconsciously will start moving back. It is easy at this point to explain to them that their directed partners were imitating the comfortable positions of South Americans and that if the undirected partners were to behave in the same way with a Latin, the Latin would think them unfriendly and cold. Conversely, in Somalia, it would be the American who would be perceived as aggressive by standing too close for Somali comfort.

The basic format of the above exercise has been used to sensitize trainees to many other behavior patterns which relate to nonverbal communication. The idea is to start out with an "informed" partner and a "control" partner and inform the one to alter his nonverbal behavior in a graduated manner to make his partner react. Both persons will have an emotional or visceral reaction, after which time they are ready to discuss what happened in an intellectual way. Emphasis is placed on the reciprocal nature of the discomfort and confusion.

These group sensitizing techniques are based on the principle that people will have an emotional reaction and will give social meaning to alterations of standard American patterns of non-

Giving to peers is done with the right hand only in Swazi; the left hand touching the wrist indicates deference.

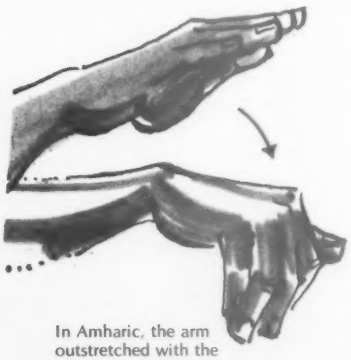
Outspread hands held up and thrust from side to side indicates, "He cannot be trusted".



An Amharic symbol denoting revenge or a serious or joking intention to beat one's wife.

The extended index finger held by the other hand means one is skinny in Amharic. Most often it is not a compliment.

Locked index fingers pulled apart signifies the hatred of violent enemies in Amharic.



In Amharic, the arm outstretched with the hand in a cupping motion indicates, "Come here".

verbal behavior. When someone blinks often, he is nervous. If he avoids our eyes, he's insecure, untrustworthy. If he doesn't nod his head in agreement or shake it in disagreement, he's not paying attention. And generally our interpretation is correct—if the other person is an American.

In addition to group exercises with a self-awareness emphasis, there are role-playing techniques in which nonverbal patterns of the target language/culture group are emphasized. Trainees watch and interpret, after which there is a dialogue with the host national role-player. In this way the trainees discover where cues were misread and what the consequences might be for them.

These potential areas of discomfort for both the American and host national are further explored after the trainee and host national have engaged in a role-playing exercise with the host national critiquing the trainee's behavior. These are not done to imitate behavior, but to explore emotional reactions. The focus is on behavior of a certain culture and does not attempt to compensate for the differences between individuals in that culture.

The discussions which follow the exercises in part are an attempt to merge the traditionally separate components of language and cultural studies as usually presented in training programs. Another purpose is to give trainees a foundation of awareness and skill which will allow them during Peace Corps service to continue building up their personal inventory of language behaviors. Training for nonverbal communication serves as an excellent orientation for an immersion language program. A heightened awareness of nonverbal behavior will make the trainees less tempted to break out of the target language and diminish their overall frustration. It is not giving them a new tool for communication, but making use of one whose potential has been dormant.

And finally, the treatment of nonverbal communication introduces some activities and discussions which are both interesting and fun while engaging Volunteers and language instructors in looking at how they perceive each other. Very often trainees need a formal excuse to start asking real questions of the host nationals. This format gives them and host nationals a situation where the potentially explosive topic can be discussed dispassionately. Corollary activities involve movies, videotapes and photographs of interface action and reaction.

The host nationals with whom I have worked at Baker, La., and the Virgin Islands have found this interesting. Once the atmosphere of mutual exploration has been established, host nationals delight in this area for it gives them a chance to explore their own cultural patterns and those of the trainees. It also goes a long way toward clearing up misconceptions the host country national got while dealing with Americans and with the potential misconceptions of the Volunteer.

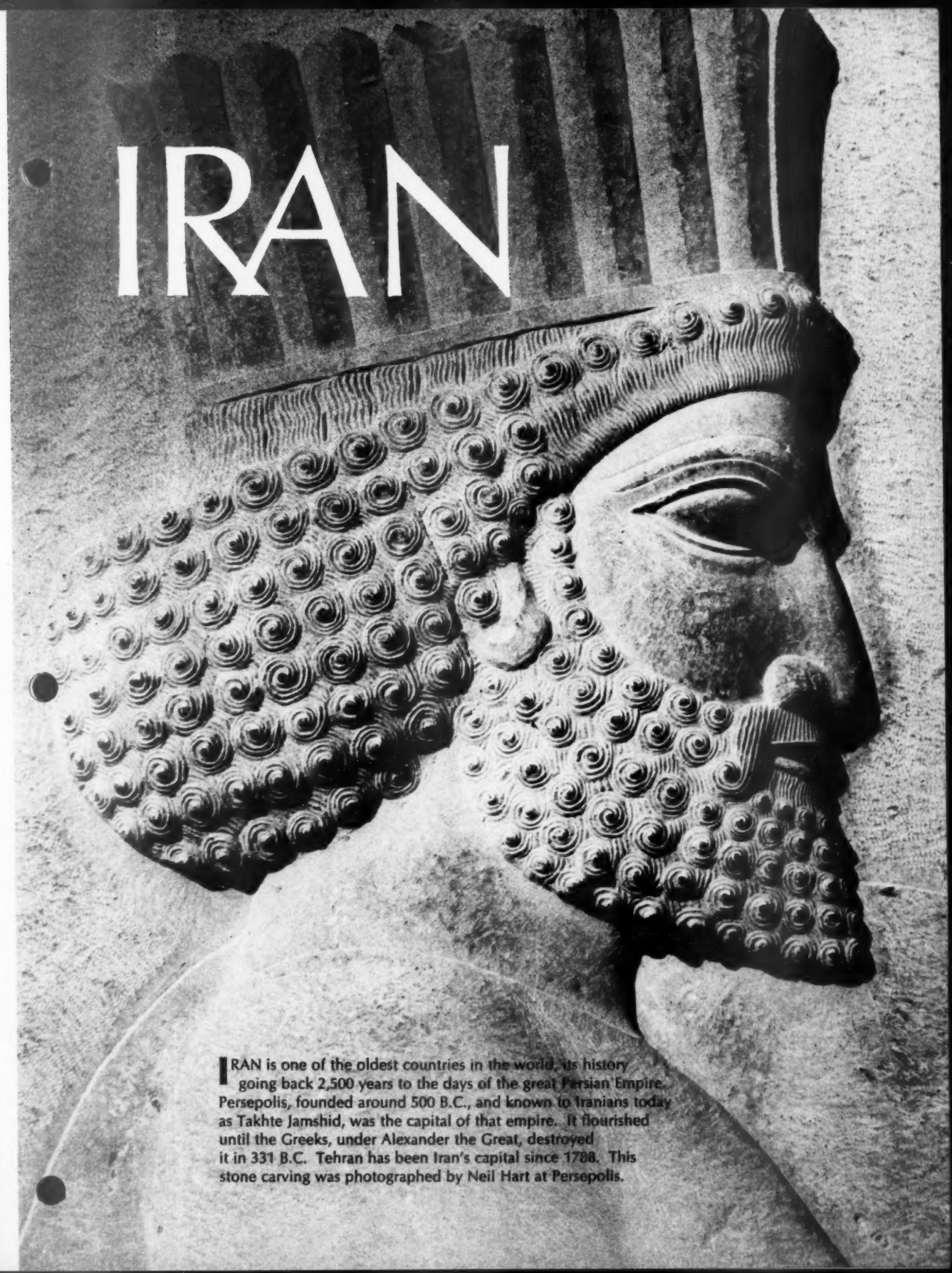
To determine the heightened awareness of nonverbal behavior of Volunteers who were "sensitized" as trainees, questionnaires are being prepared for groups in Ethiopia, Swaziland, Niger, Chad and Somalia. Already these groups have given the nonverbal presentations a high rating on program evaluation forms.

Ultimately, I want to include these techniques in a handbook offering a variety of formats, emphases and time allocations and showing how they can be adapted for the different needs of training programs. The group exercises, role-playing and audio-visual aids will focus the trainee's efforts on answering the question: "How do I conduct myself when talking with a host national in his language?"

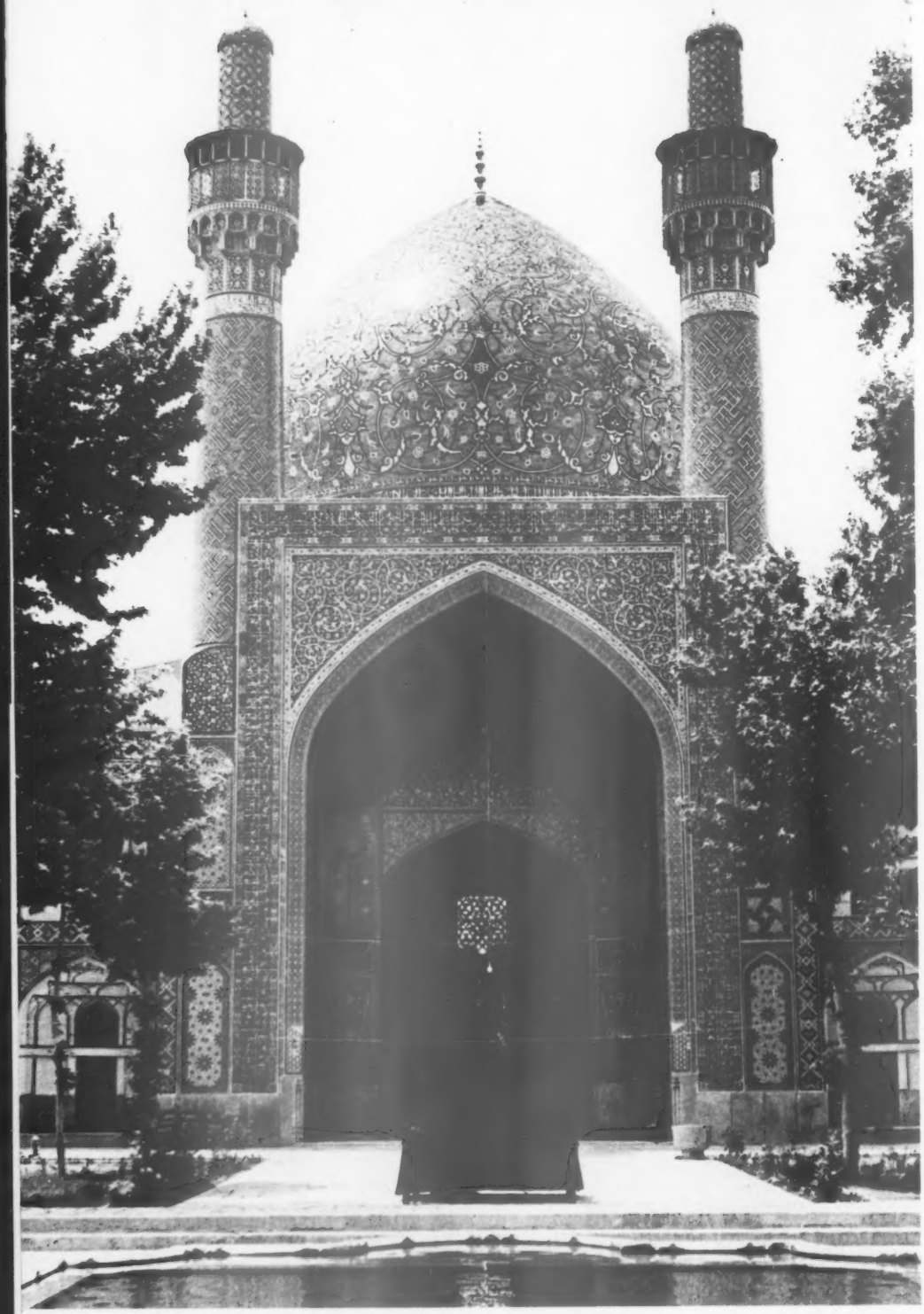
Of course, there is no guarantee that heightened awareness will change Volunteer behavior. Indeed, there may be situations where he should not alter his behavior, depending on the status, personalities and values in the social context. But the approach seeks to make Volunteers aware of an area of interpersonal activity which for too long has been left to chance or to the assumption that a Volunteer will be sensitive to it because he is surrounded by it.

*Melvin Schnapper, a returned Volunteer from Nigeria, received his master's degree in linguistics from Northwestern University in 1968. Since then, he has pursued his interest in nonverbal communication with Volunteer Training Specialists, Inc., at the Leland Peace Corps Training Center in Baker, La. Part of this article is extracted from a more extensive paper he is writing for the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D. C. Schnapper is interested in hearing from other persons who have ideas about this field as a training component. He can be reached through the training center in Baker.*

# IRAN



IRAN is one of the oldest countries in the world, its history going back 2,500 years to the days of the great Persian Empire. Persepolis, founded around 500 B.C., and known to Iranians today as Takhte Jamshid, was the capital of that empire. It flourished until the Greeks, under Alexander the Great, destroyed it in 331 B.C. Tehran has been Iran's capital since 1788. This stone carving was photographed by Neil Hart at Persepolis.



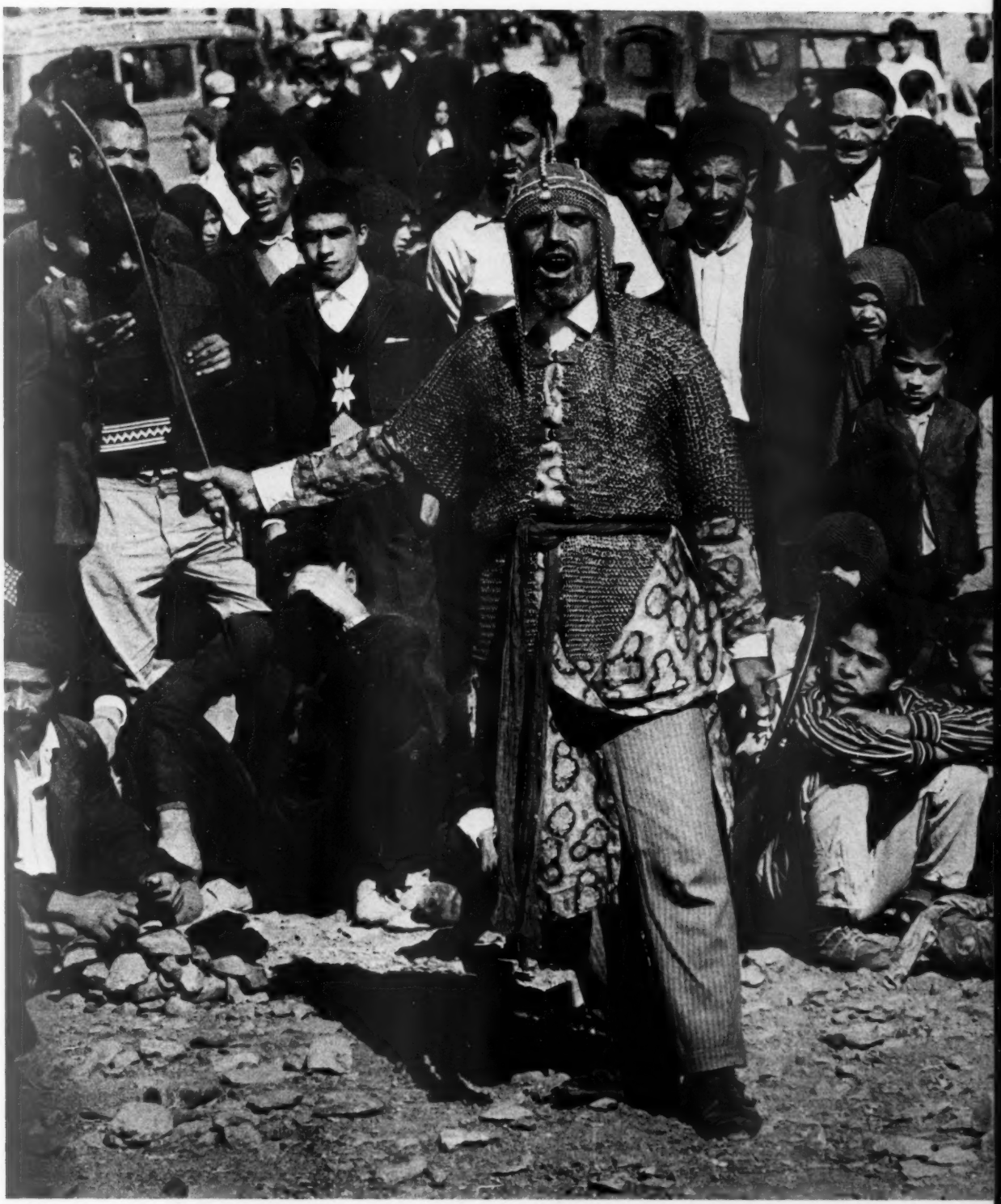
Mosques in Isfahan rank among the world's finest examples of Islamic architecture — *Steve Evans*

A mother and son make a journey for supplies — *Mike Sarka*

In Iran the movies are always crowded — *Steve Evans*

Winter in Hamadan, one of the coldest cities in Iran — *Neil Hart*

Storks in northwestern Iran
— *Dennis Yates*



An Islamic religious pageant during the holy month of Moharram — *Dennis Briskin*

Washing clothes is
a daily ritual
*— Dennis Briskin*

Rush hour on Reza Shah Avenue, Tehran. Iranian *Peykan* car is the prize of the national lottery advertised on the light poles — *Neil Hart*

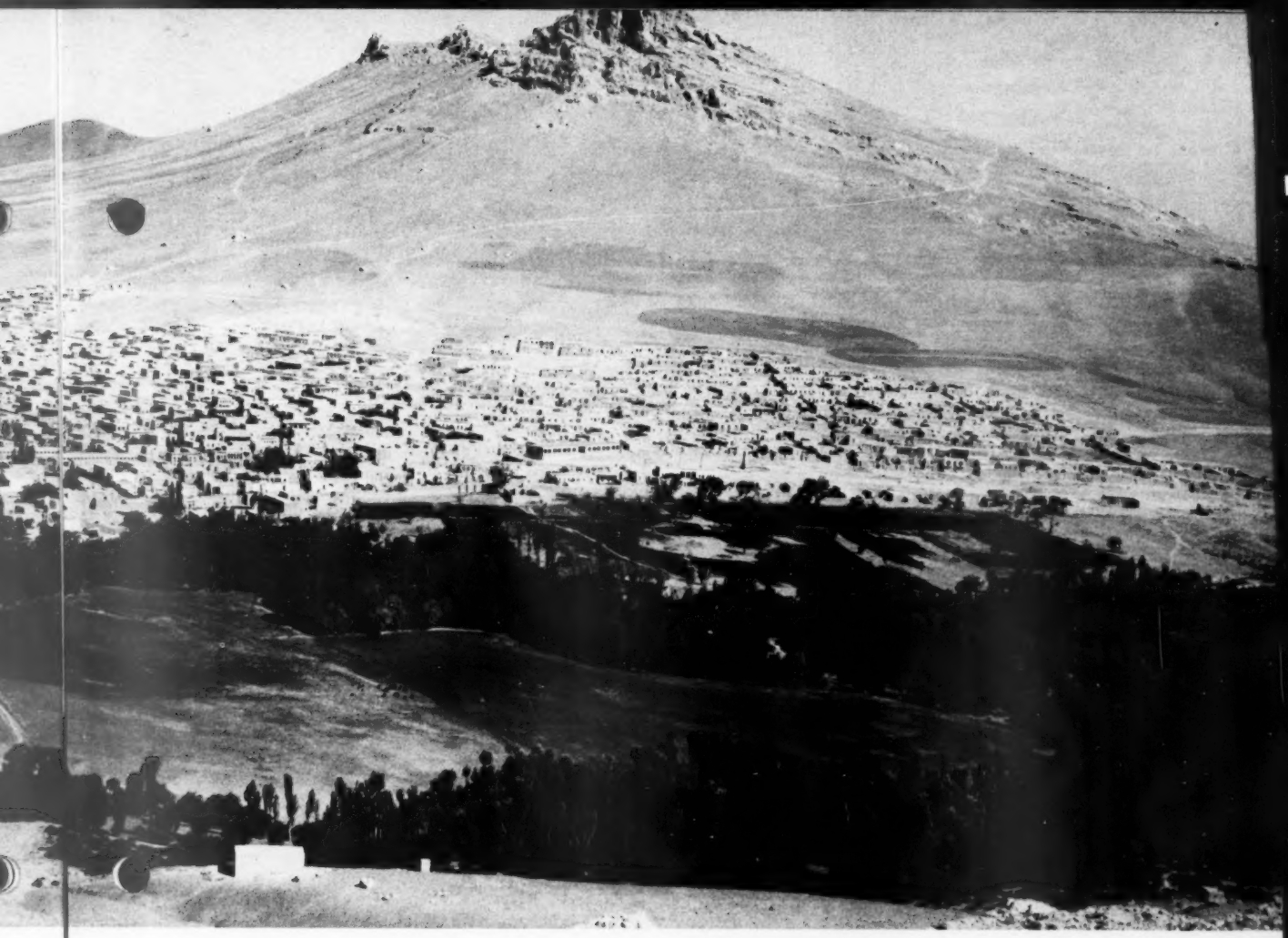
Laborers mix mud to complete a wall — *Steve Evans*

Camel makes an unprintable quote
*— Dennis Yates*

The wandering Darvish, a quasi-religious figure, performs "magic" acts and collects in the "tin cup" on his arm — *Dennis Briskin*

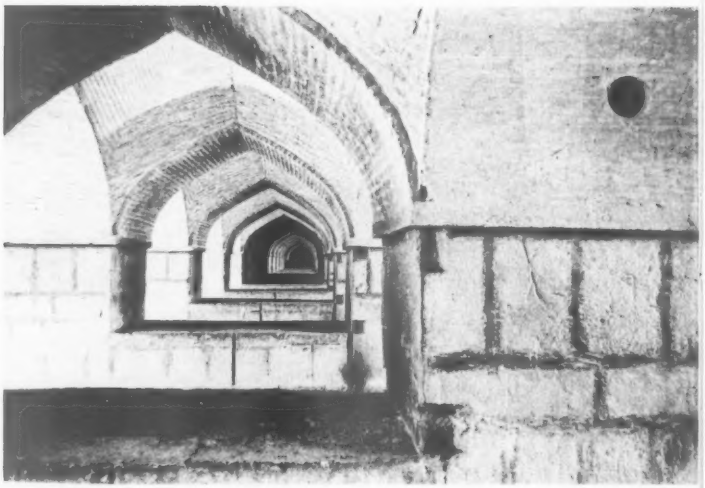
Much of the world's caviar comes from the catch of Iranian fishermen. Here nets are worked on the Caspian Sea — *Mike Sarka*

An Iranian *bannah* (mason) cleans bricks to be added to this wall — *Paul Enseki*



Mud-house town in a valley of western Iran —*Neil Hart*

Kurdish girl rides
with the family possessions
atop a camel — *Dennis Yates*



One of four bridges,
famous for its symmetrical arches,
over the Zaindeh River
in Isfahan — *Steve Freeman*

Pizza crust-like dough will be slapped onto the hot inside walls of the woman's mud oven — *Mike Sarka*

Youths from the local "House of Strength" demonstrate ancient Iranian exercises — *Dennis Briskin*

Turkoman tribesman fishes near the Soviet border — *Mike Sarka*

Kurdish woman in western Iran hauls water in her clay jug — *Steve Freeman*

A porter makes his living delivering commercial goods — *Steve Freeman*

Volunteer **Mike Sarka,** editor of the Iran Peace Corps magazine, *Sholuq Nameh,* and correspondent to *THE VOLUNTEER,* organized this photo essay on "the land where we work and people we work with". He is beginning his third year as an agricultural advisor in the village of Jaban.
Other Volunteers whose work is represented in the essay: **Dennis Briskin,** a TEFL teacher in Arak; **Paul Enseki,** an architect in Shiraz; **Steve Evans,** a landscape architect in Shiraz; **Steve Freeman,** a city planner in Shiraz; **Neil Hart,** an architect and city planner in Hamadan, and **Dennis Yates,** a Volunteer and later associate director of the Peace Corps in Iran.

PART TWO

**This report on high intensity language training comprised a chapter in Deborah Jones' comprehensive evaluation of last summer's training programs. To write her evaluation, "The Making of a Volunteer," Miss Jones combined the views of teams of evaluators and other Peace Corps staff members who visited 55 of last summer's 105 training programs. This is the second in a two-part presentation of excerpts from her report.**

# *Looking at language training:* '68 model

By DEBORAH JONES

The adoption of the HILT method for language training—by far the biggest innovation in last summer's program—raised as many questions as it answered, as innovations almost always do. Only one program did not use HILT or immersion. (HILT stands for "high intensity language training" and gives trainees eight hours of instruction a day. Immersion programs had the same eight hours of formal study, but also used the target language at all times outside of class.)

The way HILT was sprung on training sites certainly did not enhance its acceptance; many language coordinators, in particular, were angry because they were not consulted about the shift. Other staff simply did not understand it, or understood only that it took attention away from their own components.

The evaluations suggest that HILT was unevenly implemented, although this finding is partly a guess because most evaluators made their visits during non-HILT phases of training and so did not get a first-hand look at HILT. However, they did look at Foreign Service Institute (FSI) scores and talk to staff and trainees. On that basis it is possible to conclude that a large number of programs did an excellent job, and that others applied HILT half-heartedly at best. One program added the estimated time trainees spent conversing with host nationals to its count of HILT hours. A visiting linguist remarked of another that while the HILT program covered eight hours of each day, it did not contain eight hours worth of content.

In its purely linguistic aspects, HILT encountered several difficulties. One was that it requires different materials from more conventional methods. Because the pace is so rapid, materials must be more varied and more exciting than traditional FSI materials are. No special materials were prepared for last summer's HILT experiment, and so in 10 cases the language coordinators felt they had to supplement or rewrite the FSI materials as well as handle their regular duties.

Another problem, alluded to but never fully discussed in the evaluations, is staffing. HILT theory maintains that a 50 per cent "overage" should be hired for the high intensity period; otherwise the burden on the instructors is overwhelming. Evidently staffs followed this guideline only imperfectly, a situation which led to comments that they were asked to do more than any other staff members, specifically, more than the returned Volunteers.

A third problem is that the HILT method was designed primarily for beginners. Most programs did not know how to adjust the method to the needs of those trainees with prior experience with the language (usually French and Spanish).

Few staffs doubted that HILT was effective in raising FSI scores. One project director said: "HILT is like castor oil—harder than hell to take, but it works." His opinion was echoed throughout the summer programs.

Perhaps as a natural result of the heavy emphasis on scores, maybe only coincidentally, a number of staff members were beginning to express doubt about the extent to which FSI scores reflect ability to communicate. In the words of one project director: "What is essential is not an adequate FSI score or fluency, but proficiency in communication. What matters is not how fluid or grammatically correct is one's speech, but rather one's ability to deliver a message or a concept which will be understood." His point is well taken.

Since FSI materials are tailored to needs of foreign service officers and not to those of Volunteers, it is reasonable to wonder whether the FSI test necessarily yields relevant information about a Volunteer's ability to communicate.

Some programs tried to deal with "communicating" as something that can't be completely learned through language study. The two Ethiopian programs at the Virgin Islands Training Center ran special "self-assessment/communications" groups that concentrated heavily on developing the trainee's interpersonal communications skills. The Peru co-ops group introduced an entire segment on the use of the verbal imagery by which Peruvian *campesinos* communicate.

HILT's effect on the rest of the training program was even less clear-cut than its linguistic record. One danger, not always successfully avoided, was that the emphasis on language would overshadow the rest of training. HILT, for one thing, requires a distraction-free site. That means it must be isolated, and isolation is hardly conducive to the action and involvement to which the Peace Corps should be exposing trainees. Many programs solved the problem by splitting the sites, as was discussed

earlier, but others continued, after HILT was over, to train in isolation.

The number of hours and amount of attention devoted to the various parts of a program also may convey a message. At one site, so striking was the contrast between the well-organized, streamlined HILT component and the rest of training that the trainees readily concluded that language was what training was all about; at another, concern about FSI scores overshadowed concern about final boards.

That HILT affects morale is certain; how it affects it is ambiguous. The step-down from HILT in several cases caused a serious drop in trainee morale; in others, the HILT phase was credited with developing an impetus and enthusiasm that kept the rest of the program moving. It is not at all evident what circumstances are responsible for these reactions.

Some possible reasons for a post-HILT letdown are: HILT creates such a strong sense of the importance of language achievement that the cutback in hours and consequent slowing down of progress at the end of HILT may cause trainees to become panicky about ever reaching an acceptable level of fluency. HILT learning is specific, detailed and mechanical; it is easy to see progress being made; none of the other components of training offers such instant gratification, and so the end of HILT can be the beginning of the hard part of training. The quick switch from the regimentation of HILT to a training atmosphere in which the staff's expectations of a trainee and a trainee's appreciation of his own responsibility are less clear may well leave him disoriented.

There are fewer plausible explanations for HILT's positive effects on morale. Perhaps the difficulty of HILT and satisfaction at having met it successfully were responsible, perhaps the enthusiasm of the language staff stimulated excitement about the host country, perhaps the connection between language ability and successful Volunteer service was vividly presented.

An analysis of HILT's effect on morale inevitably brings up the problem of its position within the program. Presumably, by starting with HILT, trainees achieved enough fluency that language could then be built effectively into the rest of the program. An added bonus, as several programs discovered, is that the other component staffs have all that time to plan—if they are there. That may be an excellent way around the general lack of preparation time.

Several staffs complained, however, that starting off with HILT merely postpones the time when the trainee must come to grips with himself, the program, and the Peace Corps and make his decisions. If a trainee is to assess himself, he needs information from the beginning with which to do it. Staffs of programs that started with a week or two of cross-cultural studies or technical training instead of with HILT were pleased with the results. Trainees got valuable exposure to their jobs and to the Peace Corps as soon as they arrived at the site. One language coordinator said he liked it better, too—the first weeks without HILT gave him and his staff time to shake down.

Although no one tried it, some staffs came to feel that HILT might most appropriately come at the end of training. They reasoned that just before departure overseas a trainee's motivation to learn the language is at its highest and HILT would be immediately followed by field experience. Also, in multi-language programs, doing HILT at the end would ease the problem of language shifts that so plague their staffs.

The integration of cross-cultural or technical material into last summer's HILT programs was generally haphazard and poor. For one thing, even though language coordinators rewrote the FSI materials to make them more applicable to overseas service, there is little evidence that they consulted their fellow coordinators to find out what they would have liked to see included.

Three TEFL programs tried to integrate TEFL into language study, but were not particularly successful. Two of them, in an interesting and apparently productive experiment, allowed the trainees to develop the lesson plans for their language classes. In another, however, integration amounted to little more than a presentation of the school system in the host language.

No one quite knows how to attempt this so-called integration. No materials exist, and except in unusual cases the language instructors do not have the experience with TEFL techniques to make a two-way exchange possible. The technique could be fruitful, but it should be subject to much more controlled experimentation.

Integration, when it was tried, usually consisted of introducing material from the other components into language, not the other way around. That makes sense. It is impossible to participate effectively in a foreign-language discussion with a score less than 2+, and the vast majority of Peace Corps trainees do not even have that until close to the end of training, if at all. But as the experiments of the Peru co-op group described below showed, integrating material from other components into language is possible and fruitful. More often than not, however, it could not be done last summer because the necessary materials did not exist.

In one supposedly integrated French language program, trainees were spouting sophomoric dialogues about promenades in the Bois de Boulogne with which most Parisians would be hard put to identify. In others, language coordinators made an attempt to introduce new material, and in two, really managed to develop integrated language materials. The best example is probably the Peru co-op group in which enough preparation time was allotted for the project director and technical staff to teach the language staff about the problems of co-ops in Peru and to help them develop language materials bearing on Peace Corps' involvement in the co-op program. Topics included class structure, agriculture, the position of co-ops in the country, economy and some history as it related to the problems of co-ops and to the people with whom the trainees would be dealing. That program should be a model for

*Trainees participate in a "high intensity" Spanish class at the Peace Corps Training Center in Escondido, Calif.*

future language training.

Though the same general criticisms apply to immersion as to HILT, the effects of immersion seem partly to have depended on the language. The data is only indicative here, but it appears that French or Spanish immersion programs may adversely affect trainee morale. Because these are the two languages trainees are most likely to have studied before entering the Peace Corps, any group of trainees will show a range of fluency in them. When language ability becomes crucial for making friends, for knowing what is going on, for doing daily jobs like washing clothes or ordering food and when, in addition, language progress is the only basis of comparison with his fellows a trainee possesses, the less fluent trainees get discouraged easily. They may feel cut off or inadequate, and they have no way of communicating their worries to others. When, on the other hand, everyone starts at zero, immersion can be exhilarating. None of them has ever had to converse in Thai or Hausa or Turkish before, and all experience the same difficulties.

The other problem immersion raised was assessment. If a program relied on a conventional assessment model, the problem was not so serious; the assessment offices merely became havens of English. But how is a self-assessment model emphasizing counseling, informal conversation, field assessment officer (FAO) involvement, and so on to work if the FAO cannot speak the language at all and the trainee is not fluent enough to discuss what he is feeling? FAOs in several programs took language with the trainees and supplemented their participation with English hours in their offices. The approach was productive—it established rapport with the FAOs, it got the FAOs involved, it gave the FAOs valuable insight into the stresses with which the trainees were faced—but it did not fully eliminate the problem. A satisfactory solution has yet to be worked out, and any staff planning an immersion program should devote considerable time to coordinating language with assessment.

And so it is still too early to call HILT a success. It is fairly clear that it raises FSI scores, but FSI scores may not always be relevant. It is not clear how it affects the rest of training. The chief reason Peace Corps does not know these things is that HILT was endorsed so fast and imposed on the summer training programs so single-mindedly that there has not yet been a chance for the testing and evaluation a new method should undergo. It would have been almost impossible for Peace Corps Washington to monitor the progress of HILT in any case, since language staffs are not even required to inform the Division of Language Training about what they are doing. The Division can find out only by visiting the site or waiting for the final training report.

This summer Peace Corps should set up a series of experiments with HILT, placing it in different parts of the program or excluding it altogether; using standard FSI materials or materials developed particularly for a given program; using different staff ratios and rotation systems; including, in some cases, training in nonverbal communication. Only then will the quality of its performance be clear.

*Editor's note: The Peace Corps Division of Language Training reports that HILT will begin its second summer with some flexibility in the number of hours of instruction and the distribution of those hours throughout individual programs.*

*While the concentration of instruction time was the factor most often stressed during last year's HILT, the language division feels that other factors such as trainees' motivation and goals and teaching methods are equally important. The division stresses the need for "comprehensive instructional programs" where trainees know what they are expected to learn and when, geared to the needs and abilities of each trainee and the needs of each program. Once these goals are set, how the trainee learns could take many forms.*

*Looking toward such a comprehensive program, the Division of Language Training is working currently to organize an information system to gather data on language teaching and learning: trainee scores, how the characteristics of training affect language learning, how the Volunteer builds on his language skills once in country, etc. The division also hopes to tighten the FSI rating system by developing its own small group of testers. They would work as a unit, testing and helping collect data. Improved language materials, more extended teacher training and a workshop for language coordinators are also planned for the future.*



# Letters to

## On photo essays

To THE VOLUNTEER:

I wish to make both a brief commendation and a more serious criticism of the recent photo series by Steve Clapp (March VOLUNTEER).

In commendation, I am pleased to see at least something from Africa appearing occasionally in THE VOLUNTEER. I know, you don't print more because you don't get much material from here. Maybe this will prompt Volunteers and staff to send more material which shows the Peace Corps in Africa like it really is.

In criticism, the selection of pictures is not only unrepresentative, but quite misleading. To begin with, while it is geologically correct to speak of a contiguous highland stretching from Lake Chad in Bornu through Adamawa to the Southern Cameroons as a land feature, this does not become prominent until Bama and Gwoza, almost 200 miles from Lake Chad. If these photographs are [illegible] the Mandara Hills, you are incorrect in labeling the series as the Adamawa area since the photos are from Bornu and Sardauna areas.

Your picture on page 12 is of a Shuwa Arab woman and her child, who is several hundred miles from home if she was photographed in the Adamawa area.

That is a very interesting photo of a papaya tree, known in West Africa as a pawpaw, but it illustrates nothing about Adamawa.

How do you juxtapose dubiously Nupe carvings and Yoruba bronzes with Bornu, Sardauna, and Adamawa hill people? They are a thousand miles and a cultural world apart. There is a rich crafts tradition in this area, including excellent brasswork.

The people of the Mandara highlands were not driven to the hills by Muslim horsemen of the 19th century; they were driven there by incessant intertribal fighting, or more precisely, inter-clan fighting and slave-raiding, many clans eventually becoming distinct "tribes." An interesting

# s to the Volunteer

book for those who wish more on the subject is *Descent from the Hills* by Stanhope-White. The main effect of the Muslim influence was to freeze the evolution, not to cause it. Further, Islam was well established in Bornu prior to the Fulani jihads of the early 19th century.

That aside, my main objection to the photo series is the romanticized *National Geographic* views of countries presented so regularly by THE VOLUNTEER. These scenes are there; they are fascinating parts of this complex country. However, we are dangerously deluding ourselves if we assume or present this as the Volunteer's world. We set false images before ourselves and foster dissatisfaction and feelings of incompleteness when we view countries in terms of the splendor of Id-el-Kabir festivals, or the picturesqueness of a mountain village, or the exotica of a traditional market. These are but a small part of the life of a typical Volunteer. These pictures are about as typical of a Volunteer's world as Mr. Clapp's school was of their's.

One of the most common reactions of Volunteers is the rapacious gathering of artifacts and incessant picture-taking, which enables them to carry back a piece of the "culture" to prove that they really had the experience they came for. Another reaction is that of near outrage and assumption of fraud when they find the pre-service literature and romantic expectation translated into full days of teaching with few materials, hot sun on a barren dirt road, picturesque laborers who neither know nor care about community service, piles of papers which must be properly processed to get the money or materials to do the project which the photographer can then record as the miracle of community development, and so on. I have seen Volunteers feeling guilty while doing an excellent job of teaching, rejecting postings because the "culture" was more interesting in another area, defensive about preferring comfortable housing, disappointed to find colleagues wearing white shirts and generally unable to come properly to grips with their role somewhere between the traditional and the modern, sensitive to the realities and needs of both. I have also seen Volunteers deny the relevance or possibility of knowing the life of the village.

If we are ever to get any work done, we must shed ourselves of the idea of the Peace Corps Volunteer as an amateur anthropologist/social scientist incidentally working at a job and consciously promote the idea of a serious worker doing his job with as much concern as possible for the complexities and conflicts of the social context in which he works. It is not so much a question of judging the values as it is determining the priorities and the reasons why we take as a given fact the necessity to know the cultural and social context within which we work.

So, with apologies to Mr. Clapp for using his excellent pictures as an excuse for taking the rostrum, I would like to make a plea for telling it like it is, even though other things are.

FRANCIS J. METHOD
Associate Peace Corps Director,
Northern States

Kaduna, Nigeria

*Mr. Clapp responds:*

Mr. Method raises a number of serious criticisms of my photo essay in the March VOLUNTEER. Let me deal with these one at a time.

• Misrepresentation: The Western Nigerian art works—Benin bronzes (and they are Benin, not Yoruba as previously identified) and a Yoruba carving of a Nupe horseman—were inadvertently included in the essay as a result of a misunderstanding between THE VOLUNTEER editors and myself. I was not trying to palm them off as art indigenous to the Adamawa area, although the reader would understandably have thought so. Similarly, the Kanuri mother and child (not Shuwa Arab) were located "in the Mandara Hills" through editorial error.

• Inaccuracy: Adamawa Province was historically larger than its present boundaries. Territory ruled by the Fulani emir Adama and his successors included most of what is now Sardauna Province as well as parts of Adamawa Province in the Cameroons. (cf. Kirk-Greene *Adamawa Past and Present*). It was my understanding that the tribes on the hills had been driven there during Adama's raids in the early 19th century, but Mr. Method's account may be the correct one. Certainly the warfare between Muslim plainsmen and pagan hill tribes is well established.

• *National Geographic* romanticism: Guilty. The pictures were intended as an essay on traditional Africa, not as an anthropological treatise or a picture of the Volunteer's world. Oddly enough, when I was in Yola in 1963 and 1964, I heard many of the same views that Mr. Method expresses in his letter. At that time it was considered terribly gung-ho to visit the bush. You only left your duty station to work on a project or to visit other Volunteers in other cities. Fellow Volunteers informed you that you had been conned into coming to Africa to do a job, and all the rest was public relations. Some of us refused to believe it. The smart ones learned Hausa (I confess I didn't). The rest of us, romantics perhaps, decided to learn something about ourselves and our students by visiting the traditional cultures. Sure, we were tourists, although I can claim to have spent a month teaching primary school in one of the villages photographed. Our students called us Peace Corps spies. But if we hadn't looked around us, if we had been content to snap self-congratulatory pictures of our schools and our students, how would we have differed from the colonials and missionaries who came before us? At least we came prepared to learn as well as to teach. I would like to think that our clumsy efforts to appreciate the traditional cultures pointed to more productive efforts by later Volunteers. Apparently they did not. But I'm not ashamed of my pictures or the memories associated with them.

STEVE CLAPP

Washington, D. C.

## Learn by doing

To THE VOLUNTEER:

After reading the letters in the February issue, I couldn't help but ponder over the reasons that Margo Conk and her husband had joined Peace Corps in the first place—perhaps

because the majority of my group (Malaysia IX) entered not to find a job for two years (that could have been done here in the good ole U.S.A.), but to teach and by doing so, learn ourselves.

I was faced with the problem of a British medical officer who could not have cared less if there was a Peace Corps Volunteer working under him and who literally despised the midwives whom I was to work with. For almost six months I made my own work—visiting *kampongs,* getting to know the people of my town and the outlying district and trying to win the confidence of the trained midwives who at this point were very dissatisfied and discouraged with their assignments.

Through patience and perserverance we worked together and when a new medical officer was assigned to our district, we managed to open several new Maternal-Child-Health clinics, vaccinated over 100 school children against polio,, overcame some fears about the evils of European medicine and hospitals and most important—won the confidence of many mothers.

To me, this "job" which Peace Corps found for me was far more rewarding than any I had previously held or hope to hold in the future.

Perhaps Mr. and Mrs. Conk and several other Volunteers should examine their original motives for joining Peace Corps and the Peace Corps' ultimate ideals and purposes.

BARBARA HOFFMAN GRUBB
Former Volunteer

## Relax and be

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

Yes, I find myself in a comfortable house, better than a two-room apartment in New York. Yes, I am at a boarding school relatively "sealed off" from the *community.* Yes, my students are "eager to memorize" and try to reject information which isn't on the syllabus. Yes, indeed, they scorn certain habits of traditional villagers surrounding the school. (On the campus it is hard to get them to speak English, but you won't find one of them speaking the local language once they're off it.) And, yes, sometimes I feel like a British contract teacher with a lousier contract.

For a while I felt guilty that I was not living in a mud hut, or learning the language fluently, or emoting with villagers. I was beginning to share the view of many non-teaching Volunteers that somehow the only *people* of this country were the poor, illiterate villagers and that you just weren't doing anything valuable if you weren't dealing with them. The students or civil servants aren't *people,* or certainly not the ones we "role played" with in training! Oh, how I wished I could travel around the countryside by motorcycle visiting all the villages, dispensaries and farms where the *real* people of the third world could be found.

Now I like it here . . . I strive to live in the present, to avoid thinking how things should be. There are too many things to dig in the world. And, I suppose, as I jaunt around school and skip into the classroom, I am giving people a strange new experience: Seeing a white man who actually enjoys himself. In rejecting goals and precipitating change I am, perhaps, coming closer to the third world villager than anyone in a mud hut.

But I haven't changed my position. I am still a lofty white man. I do not live in a mud hut. I have even Westernized (Easternized?) myself further by purchasing a record player and some new rock records. I *even* (horror of horrors) try to turn some of my students on to them! And I have come to the conclusion that the best way any Volunteer can understand or appreciate his position is to read Henry Miller.

As Miller ponders, while urinating in Paris: "So Robinson Crusoe not only found a way of getting along, but even established for himself a relative happiness! Bravo! One man who was satisfied with a *relative* happiness. So Anglo-Saxon, so pre-Christian!" I add: Don't *do* or *understand;* just *relax,* and *be.*

PETER H. DAVIS
Karonga, Malawi

## Lessons of history

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

Fortunately, our predecessors chose not to follow the course of Mr. Creesy's training program (March VOLUNTEER) and showed us a wheel already made with detailed instructions about its construction. Thus freed from the burden of discovering the wheel for himself, for the umpteen millionth time in history, man has since invented the oxcart, the mill, the clock, the elevator, the automobile, the airplane, not to mention the press that prints THE VOLUNTEER.

Indeed, had our historical predecessors taken what Mr. Creesy advocates seriously, we would not even have the paper upon which you, I and Mr. Creesy write. Although doubtless the Escondido training program was valuable, isn't it possible that there are some principles of history that could also apply to Peace Corps?

BILL MILLER
Yaounde, Cameroon

## Placement technique

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

I am an RPCV from Uruguay presently involved in a training program at the Peace Corps Training Center in Escondido, Calif. In my work I have been able to see many of the bad points as well as the merits of the Peace Corps. However, one of the things which disturbs me much more than others about the Peace Corps is the way in which Volunteers are programmed, the way in which sites are secured. In the case of many countries there are too many Volunteers; the trainees do not know much about what they are going to do, nor where they are going before they actually get there, and the host country people are not made to feel responsible for the Volunteer.

Uruguay has tried and had success with a technique which I think deserves mention here. In Uruguay no request is made for a Volunteer until some town or institution has actually requested that a Volunteer come. The Peace Corps office then goes out to make sure that the town or institution is sincere in its desire for a Volunteer. A tape recording is made in which the people or institution requesting the Volunteer state what their desires are, what the job will be, and what they recognize as their responsibility to the Volunteer to be. Only at this point does Peace Corps Washington begin looking for *a* potential Volunteer for this site or program. When that Volunteer is found and goes to training, he receives the tape and thus becomes aware of (1) where he is going, (2) what is to be expected of him, and (3) what he can expect from the supporting institution. After training is over, the tape is filed away in the Peace Corps Uruguay office.

Although the amount of preparatory work necessary in country before the Volunteer is even requested would greatly reduce the number of Volun-

teers in any given country, I think that the effectiveness of the individual Volunteer would increase proportionately. From the beginning he would know what was expected of him, where he was going, and what to expect. There would be fewer cases of Volunteers without jobs, of Volunteers disappointed because they didn't expect what they "got," etc. Such a method of programming would give the Peace Corps the quality and effectiveness it needs, instead of the quantity and "dead wood" which it already has.

GEORGE WILCOX

Escondido, Calif.

## Malawi ag program

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

I just want to "ditto" the letter written by LeRoy Mabery (April VOLUNTEER). A very similar situation occurred here in Malawi with the first agricultural group. There's one difference: Washington staff had visited Malawi and talked with Volunteers here and then went back to Washington to write erroneous reports and cancel the next program on the basis of misinformation.

The problems in our program were worked out by staff and Volunteers here, and we honestly thought we had submitted a *good* program. In rejecting the project, Washington gave reasons which made us think that either they had the wrong project in front of them or they were so intent on not approving this project that any reasons for refusal would suffice.

Agriculture is about the only thing Malawi has for natural resources. It is an area where the government is placing great emphasis. For Peace Corps not to be involved in agriculture not only makes no sense to us here, but also makes us wonder what we should involve ourselves in that would meet the approval of Washington and at the same time aid in the development of the country. I also repeat: *Upon what bases are program decisions made?*

Might I be so bold as to suggest that in the case of Malawi, it might be political prejudice?

JOHN FLEMING

Blantyre, Malawi

THE VOLUNTEER *welcomes letters on all subjects of interest to the Peace Corps. Letters are subject to condensation.*

# *Memorandum*

TO : The field
FROM : The editors
SUBJECT: Moving on

DATE: June, 1969

**Passing up a job on his father's ranch,** ignoring the urge to write tangos in Argentina and leaving his rose bushes behind, Jack Vaughn goes to Colombia this month as U.S. ambassador. The appointment by President Nixon marks the former Peace Corps director's second ambassadorial assignment, having served as the U.S. envoy to Panama in 1964-65. And it's a return to a country he has visited many times, mostly to talk with Peace Corps Volunteers. Vaughn will be back and forth between Washington and Bogotá before he settles in the Andean capital at the end of June. In mid-June he will accompany Colombian President Carlos Lleras Restrepo on a state visit to Washington. Meanwhile, he is preparing for his tour, finding the atmosphere at the State Department "very heady" and visiting literally dozens of organizations and institutions in and around government. "But the Peace Corps isn't on my briefing list," he says.

**Mark Brown, our correspondent in Korea,** reports that a Volunteer there has won first place in the Korean Language Oratorical Contest for Foreign Nationals. William B. McCloy, after delivering a speech on the use of Hangul, the Korean alphabet, was presented with a citation and the silver trophy provided by President Chung Hee Park. Two other Volunteers, Garry Katsel and Timothy O'Brien, were among the twelve who received awards. Contestants from six different countries participated. In the accompanying photo, McCloy receives his award from Kim Bong-gi, the president and publisher of *The Korea Herald* which sponsored the contest.

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**Billed as "sole power,"** the Africa Trek for Development in May attracted between 20 and 30 Peace Corps hikers. About a dozen of them walked the 24 miles around Washington, D. C.'s Rock Creek Park and thus helped raise money for Operation Crossroads Africa, the American Freedom from Hunger Foundation and a Washington day-care center. Upwards of 200 staff members pledged money to the hikers based on miles finished. Some walked for $1 or less a mile, but C. Payne Lucas, Peace Corps' Africa director, had accumulated pledges which made him worth $39 a mile; he finished the course and thus netted nearly $1000 for the cause.

## Peace Corps outmoded?

To The Volunteer:

A good while ago, I looked at the Peace Corps and said to myself: Screw it! It's not even worth worrying about. But last November, due to a Selective Service situation beyond my control, I became involved in a Peace Corps training program as a quasi-staff member. After that experience, I still don't think the Peace Corps is worth worrying about.

Recently, while leafing through the March Volunteer (the way I leaf through a *National Geographic* magazine—glancing at the pictures), Christine Jacobson's letter moved me to put my distaste into words.

The Botswana training session I mentioned was a failure simply because the staff segregated themselves, never really viewing the trainees as equal human beings. In fact, the chasm was so wide that when the staff de-selected three trainees at the end of the program, the trainees staged a sit-in strike refusing to go to Botswana unless their fellow trainees were re-instated. They held the strike because they believed the staff was incapable of knowing who should or should not be selected since the staff did not know the trainees. Peace Corps Washington responded by sending one of its bureaucrats to the training site. After an investigation, he concurred with the trainees that the staff was incapable of judging the merits of the trainees. However, it was not for trainees to decide who should be selected. They, the trainees, must have "faith and trust" that the director knows best. Further, he said it gave him faith in the youth of America that they staged such a strike and they in turn should have faith in the Peace Corps because of the way Peace Corps responded. He hoped the Peace Corps would never repress such expressions of Volunteer spirit. Whether or not the Peace Corps should emphasize technical skills or personal communication was another problem he hoped would never be resolved. Such intellectual conflicts as these are what makes the Peace Corps what it is. Correct! It isn't much.

I omit the administrator's name only because I don't remember it.

Being a "draft dodger," I also noticed in the same issue of The Volunteer "A look at PCVs who face the draft." The article presents a detached view of how the draft affects individual Peace Corps Volunteers. The article states that Volunteers may "avoid induction through circumstances which could range from failing the military physical to entering an educational or otherwise deferable category." I submit there are other methods being employed.

I bring up these situations to buttress my point. The Peace Corps is a small, insignificant arm of the U.S. government, an outmoded appendage whose slight movements are controlled by the prevailing philosophy of the current U.S. government. The Peace Corps program in Botswana is a "nice" facet of a U.S. foreign policy that reinforces apartheid through American business investment, gold purchases, satellite tracking stations, etc. Across the United States and throughout the world, youth are refusing to let older people make decisions for them. Yet the Peace Corps tells its Volunteers to have faith and trust in the administration to make the decisions for them. Activist youth are confronting the draft and resisting it. It is easy to understand how a bureaucracy that views these people as "draft dodgers" fails to attract them.

When Kennedy was President, the "Peace" Corps was alive, growing because he was alive and growing. With Johnson, it became static; conflicts became dilemmas. And with Nixon, it will become outmoded, regressive, and, hopefully, die.

Kevin Kane

Crawfordville, Ga.

## Building 'self-hood'

To The Volunteer:

In reference to "Cold Peace Corps hash" by Miss Jacobson (March Volunteer):

I disagree with her when she says that no one knows what Peace Corps is all about. Peace Corps is an individual's organization. Miss Jacobson, like many others who ask this question, appears to think a suitable or satisfactory answer can be given to her. It is for each Volunteer to work out his or her "own bag."

Peace Corps experience helps establish "self-hood" which enables an individual to function in the world with confidence and direction. But in a larger sense, the ability to relate this feeling of identification to others who have not shared this experience cannot be overemphasized.

I shall not be so naive as to offer comments on how Peace Corps has affected the flow of history. Two years is not enough time to do a good job in the Peace Corps and three years is too long to receive a Volunteer's allowance. Miss Jacobson is not the only one who entered Peace Corps with high, bright ideas. Many Volunteers enter Peace Corps looking for or expecting too much too fast.

Vernon L. Washington

Leribe, Lesotho

The Volunteer *has received many more responses to Christine Jacobson's letter. They will appear next month.*

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